of Ports; Current Port capabilities and recent performance; competitive situation and outlook; new business opportunities and demand forecast; Removing barriers to Ports performance; required investment in Port facilities and equipment; required improvements in hinterland connectivity; financing future investment requirements.

(c) Ports declared as Major Ports under the Indian Ports Act, 1908 are under the administrative control of the Central Government. All other ports, including private ports, collectively known as Non-Major Ports are under the overall jurisdiction of the respective Maritime State Governments.

(d) Visakhapatnam Port Trust is a Major Port.

National Cruise Shipping Policy

2294. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that considering the ever-increasing potential of cruise tourism and consequent development of infrastructure, a comprehensive National Cruise Shipping Policy was on unvil in consultation with various agencies and stakeholders;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the present position thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A High Power Streering Group under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister (Shipping, Road Transport & Highways) with the Union Minister of Tourism & Culture as Co-Chairperson was set up to formulate a cruise shipping policy with the objective of making India a major cruise tourism destination for attracting the right segment of foreign cruise tourists and for popularising cruise shipping, facilitating creation of requisite infrastructure and creating a conducive environment. The policy is under finalization in consultation with the concerned Ministries.

National Highway Projects behind schedule

2295. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether many of the National Highway projects are lagging behind schedule;

(b) if so, the details of projects lagging behind schedule and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken to complete the projects in time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) 143 numbers of National Highway projects under National Highway Development Project (NHDP) as well as 34 number of projects with State PWD each costing more than Rs. 5.00 crore are lagging behind the schedule due to problems associated with acquisition of land, shifting of utilities, delay in environmental and forest clearance, poor performance of some contractors and law & order and insurgency problems in some States.

(c) The Government closely monitors the progress of the construction works of National Highways at various levels through quarterly reviews and also has taken steps like appointing

senior officers as nodal officers for resolving problems, constituting a Committee of Secretaries to address inter-ministerial and central-state issues and has taken action against defaulting contractors in order to ensure completion of National Highways works as per stipulated time frame.

Four-laning of Patna-Hajipur-Muzaffarpur Section

†2296. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) had invited tenders some days ago for four-laning of Patna-Hajipur-Muzaffarpur section of East-West four-lane Highway in order to connect Muzaffarpur to Patna in Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that process of construction of the said road is still incomplete as no one has submitted any tender against the invited tenders; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and Government's view point in this regard and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) to (c) 4 laning of Patna-Muzaffarpur section of NH 19 & 77 has been included under NHDP Phase III in the State of Bihar on BOT (Toll) mode. Bids for 4 laning of Patna-Muzaffarpur Section of NH 19 & 77 were invited in June 2005 under old Model Concession Agreement (MCA) for which no response was received. Bids were again invited for the second time in June 2007 on the basis of new MCA with the last date of submission of bid as 20.08.2007. But, no response was received this time also.

(d) As there is no response of bidders on toll based BOT bid for the project stretch, Government has accorded approval for changing the mode of upgradation of Patna-Muzaffarpur Section of NH 19 & 77 from BOT (Toll) to BOT (Annuity).

Spud lying in sea near Ramsetu

2297. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a 50 tonne spud is lying unsalvaged for over 12 months in the sea near Ramsetu;

(b) whether it is because of turbulence of sea waves which may not allow smooth ship movement;

(c) whether this spud is damaging vessels and fishing nets; and

(d) whether the affected parties have been paid compensation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Broken spud pieces weighing about 67 tonnes,

†*Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.*